

REMARKS

Claims 18-33 are pending in the application. Claim 18 is amended, and claims 34 and 35 are newly presented.¹ Applicants request reconsideration and allowance in view of the above amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 18-20 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Winkler et al., U.S. 3,793,703, in view of Bielefeldt, U.S. 3,697,725, and Lee et al., U.S. 5,934,544. According to the Office Action, Winkler discloses all features recited in those claims except for directing a first blank through a furnace or directing the first blank between a pair of rollers having profiled surfaces. However, according to the Office Action, the secondary references disclose those features such that the claimed invention would have been obvious. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Even as originally presented, claim 18 recited that the first blank is fed to a forging press with a number of cooperating die pads. As one of skill in the art would have understood from that, but as amplified by the present amendment, what that means is that the first blank is worked by die forging. This feature is recited in new claims 34 and 35 as well. Winkler, in contrast, does not show that. Rather, Winkler relies on roll forging. See, for example, column 2, lines 30-32 of Winkler (“After cutting to the proper length, the semifinished blank is then roll-forged into the finished housing shape.”) That is not the same as or an obvious variant of die forging, as explained in the accompanying declaration of Stefan Preijert. Accordingly, Applicants traverse the rejection and request that it be withdrawn.

Claims 21, 22, and 24-33 are objected to as depending from rejected base claims but are otherwise indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter. In view of the foregoing, however, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, and timely Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

¹ A Request for Continued Examination is being filed with this Amendment. Accordingly, the amendment and new claims should be entered and considered.

The undersigned representative requests any extension of time that may be deemed necessary to further the prosecution of this application.

The undersigned representative authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17 that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 14-1437, referencing Attorney Docket No.: 0173.038.PCUS01.

In order to facilitate the resolution of any issues or questions presented by this paper, the Examiner may directly contact the undersigned by phone to further the discussion.

Novak Druce + Quigg LLP
1000 Louisiana, Fifty-Third Floor
Houston, Texas 77002
(713) 571-3400
(713) 456-2836 (fax)
tracy.druce@novakdruce.com

Respectfully submitted,

/Kenneth M. Fagin/

Kenneth M. Fagin, Esq.
Reg. No. 37,615
(202) 204-4662
ken.fagin@novakdruce.com